

DRAFT
Meeting Minutes
for
September 13 and 14, 2000 Site Visit and Meeting
Pursuant to the: Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and Endangered Species Act

Project: Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park (MWD), Tamiami Trail General
Reevaluation Report and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (GRR/SEIS)

Purpose

The site visit and meeting was intended to initiate coordination between the Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (CESAJ) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) pursuant to the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act and the Endangered Species Act.

Attendees

Representatives of the CESAJ, USFWS, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC), Everglades National Park (ENP) (Sept. 13 meeting only), Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) were in attendance. See attendee list at

Attachment 1.

Summary of September 13 Site Visit

Site visit accomplishments included identification of pertinent existing site conditions and project constraints including:

1. The approximate 10 mile segment of Tamiami Trail in the project area is bounded on the north and south by wetlands.
2. The south side is predominantly bounded by ENP property and property subject to future ENP acquisition. An exception is the Airboat Association property that will remain privately owned. Additionally, the Osceola Camp is expected to remain, even though the ENP owns the underlying land. Two existing radio (?) tower facilities are also expected to remain, at least for a significant period of time.
3. Significant natural resources/project constraints south of the road segment, in addition to wetlands, include stands of pond apple trees which, interestingly, occurred at the site of most road culvert outfalls. Two particular areas, occupied by large stands of trees (predominantly pond apple), are known rookeries that are utilized by wood stork and other significant bird species. North of the road, in addition to wetlands, an existing rookery known as "frog city" was noted, as well as a hardwood (?) hammock. Snail Kites were also observed in the wetlands north of the road.
4. Dave Ferrell (USFWS) and Tim Towles (FFWCC) hiked into the "Tamiami West" rookery and observed that the nearest wood stork nests were about 300 feet from the road right-of-way.
5. Existing businesses were noted.
6. Existing project features were noted.
7. Recreational boating access points were noted.
8. Location of Tigertail Camp was noted.

9. Proposed location of L-29 weirs and S-356, under the "Conveyance and Seepage" initiatives of MWD was noted.

Summary of September 14 Meeting

1. Regarding endangered species and other species of special concern. Jim Baker of the CESAJ was directed to send letters formally requesting pertinent information from the Vero Beach, Florida field offices of the USFWS and FFWCC. Letters will be mailed out shortly. Wood stork is the primary species of concern. However, there are others, including but not necessarily limited to tricolored heron, little blue heron, and white ibis. There may also be plant species of concern. The pond apple, for example.

Project planning could require protective zones and possibly timing and phasing constraints to avoid significant impact to wood stork nesting.

2. Regarding the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. Dave Ferrell, USFWS, described the purpose of the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report (CAR) as being to report the views of the Department of Interior to the Congress, with recommendations to mitigate and ameliorate project effects and to enhance project purposes. The USFWS and ENP provided a draft CAR outline including what they view as the project purpose, requirements and objectives that the CAR would recommend for consideration in the GRR/SEIS. See **Attachment 2**.
3. Dave Ferrell proposed a CAR preparation schedule that includes a Draft CAR around March 1, 2001 and Final around June 1, 2000. This is not consistent with the current GRR/SEIS schedule. In order for the Draft CAR to be included in the Draft GRR/SEIS the Draft CAR would be needed in early November 2000. This conflict needs to be resolved.
4. Dave Sikkema (ENP) stated to issues that he thinks are of primary importance: do not divorce Tamiami Trail issues from the larger framework of mod waters, and abide by FDOT structural requirements.
5. Potential applicability of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966 (Title 49, USC, Section 1653(f)). This applies to DOT projects and probably does not apply to projects funded by the Department of Interior. However, the Doris Marlin, CESAJ Project Manager should request an opinion from Office of Counsel.
6. Appropriateness of current modeling was discussed and agreement reached to have a follow-on teleconference in the following week (Chris Smith and Martin Gonzalez, CESAJ, participated by phone).

Tasks

1. Resolve conflicts between the current GRR/SEIS schedule and the proposed CAR schedule.
2. Dave Ferrell, USFWS, will provide a CAR final scope of work and cost estimate.
3. Jim Baker, CESAJ, will expedite funding of the CAR once agreement is reached on the scope and schedule of work.
4. Jim Baker, CESAJ, will determine what aerial photography is available and provide to the USFWS and FFWCC.

5. Jim Baker, CESAJ, will send formal letters requesting list of species of special concern to USFWS and FFWCC.
7. Doris Marlin, CESAJ Project Manager, will request an opinion from Office of Counsel regarding applicability of Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966.